

MHDS COMMISSION
December 3, 2020
9:30 am to 12:30 pm
Zoom

MHDS COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Betsy Akin	Maria Sorensen
Diane Brecht	Cory Turner
Teresa Daubitz	Richard Whitaker
Janee Harvey	Russell Wood
John Parmeter	Lorrie Young
Timothy Perkins	

MHDS COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:

Shari O'Bannon

OTHER ATTENDEES:

Darci Alt	Julie Jetter
Tammie Amsbaugh	Torie Keith
Theresa Armstrong	Todd Lange
Kris Bell	Brooke Lovelace
Jess Benson	Eric Mullins
Teresa Bomhoff	Marcia Mullins
Mari Brannaman	Sherry Murphy
Dennis Bush	Caitlin Owens
Rachel Cecil	Flora Schmidt
Victoria Daniels	Susan Seehase
Marissa Eyanson	Kelsey Thien
Michael Gillette	Jason Vermeer
Jan Heikes	Brady Werger
Jane Hudson	
Sandi Hurtado-Peters	

Welcome and Introductions

John Parmeter called the meeting to order at 9:32am and led introductions. Quorum was established with eleven members present virtually.

Review and Vote on October 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Betsy Akin made a motion to approve the October 15, 2020 meeting minutes. Richard Whitaker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Review and Vote on Approval of the Commission's Biennial Report

The Commission reviewed several changes and comments by Russell Wood to the Biennial Report that was initially submitted for review. John Parmeter asked for questions. He then indicated that Betsy Akin had emailed him questions regarding SF504 and what its expectations are relating to unspent balances in the Region. Russell Wood briefly reviewed this legislation, indicating that it sets the fund balance cap for the Regions at 40% and that Regions have to

spend down their balances to that cap by July 2022. John Parmeter asked if there were any more changes or points of discussion. With no further discussion or changes, John Parmeter entertained a motion to approve the report. The changes were accepted by the Commission with Russell Wood motioning to approve the report with changes, and was seconded by Tim Perkins. The motion passed unanimously.

John Parmeter recommended that the Commission have more interaction with the Children's State Board in terms of trying to incorporate some of their thoughts into our annual report. MHDS Commission may be able to help emphasize some of their major concerns by including it in our annual recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature. John also indicated there should be an agenda item added to the February meeting of Commission to include a designation of the Commission's next representative to the State Children's Board.

Mental Health and Disabilities Services Regional Policies and Procedures Amendments

Jan Heikes with Iowa Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Disability Services introduced Darci Alt, CEO, Heart of Iowa Community Services Region to review amendments to the Regional Policies and Procedures. Darci indicated that there were very few changes made. These changes included simple language changes to show that the Annual Budget and Service Plans are reviewed and completed annually, updates of the organizational structure of the governing boards to include the new members and define voting, and to include Children's Advisory and Adult Advisory. Changes also included children and guardian procedure in the confidentiality section, and added children's eligibility criteria and definitions as well. Russell Wood motioned to recommend approval of the Heart of Iowa Management Plan. Betsy Akin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Update on Children's Behavioral Health System State Board

John Parmeter reported that Children's State Board met twice in November, with one of the primary activities of those meetings being the annual report for the Children's State Board. This report was belatedly emailed out to all Commission members earlier this morning. This report was just approved at the November 24th meeting. The Children's Board identified seven priorities. These priorities include; universal screenings, creating a stable and adequate funding system for children's services, have growth in service and accessibility of mental health services for children throughout the state, expanding and enhancing the workforce of children's mental health services, development of statewide data for children's mental health services, elimination of the Children's Mental Health Waiver List, and the establishment of a statewide resource mapping mechanism for children's mental health services.

John indicated that the Children's State Board report expands on their activities in each of those "priority" areas including a lengthy discussion at the last meeting on a study the department is doing on PMIC rates for children's residential care, and the fact that their findings are that the current rates paid by Medicaid are not adequate to cover the costs of the providers of those services. Also looked at law enforcement's attempts to have both more information about the people they interact with in terms of their ability to access mental health information and attempts to integrate more mental health education into police force activities and personnel, and ways to defer or send out mental health issues to be handled by mental health providers rather than being handled by the police force.

Theresa Armstrong informed the Commission that the Children's State Board decided to schedule another meeting prior to the February meeting as they have specific topics they would like discuss. This meeting is to include a "Parents Panel" so that the Board can hear about parent experiences with the system. They also wanted to have another conversation prior to legislative session. That meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2021.

MHDS Update

Marissa Eyanson led the Commission through an update on current activities of the division. Marissa said that the RFP to look at how we go forward in the some of those spaces that we share between DHS and IDPH is out, and will be getting those RFPs in soon for review.

Marissa noted that MHDS continues to have conversations around the Community Integration Plan and gathering stakeholder feedback. That goes in line with ongoing work with the Department of Justice who are still here in the state and doing their investigation. No conclusions at this point, but anticipate there will be conclusions and actions that will be a continuation of the work that is currently being done.

Beginning to hear from some stakeholders about their legislative priorities. Concerns for most are related to the response to COVID-19 and how to ensure our provider community can continue to survive and thrive through the pandemic. DHS does not have specific priorities to share at this time and are just looking at some themes which include the work around our Medicaid program to stabilize our staffing, the collaboration with the consultant to look at behavioral health as a whole through the lens of both the work we do with MHDS and that of public health, and the work DHS does with the Department of Justice and community integration.

Theresa Armstrong provided a brief update on CARES Act money and how Medicaid has been tracking dollars to assure that we efficiently and effectively spend the dollars between the regional money as well as HCBS programs, community-based programs, mental health providers and substance use disorder providers who also received dollars through an application process. Through that process there was found that there was some extra money. This week, Medicaid released an informational letter for PMICs, nursing facilities, and ICF/IDs to also receive some of these CARES Act dollars. The same requirements must be met. The dollars must be spent by December 30, 2020 and is for the time period from March until December 30th. These dollars are to help with additional costs that occurred due to the pandemic.

Theresa reported that COVID Recovery Iowa is a federally funded, virtual mental health crisis and outreach program that DHS is administering, but have five contractors that are running the program with over 100 staff hired. Theresa reinforced that it is for everyone in the state. There are three lines that can be contacted. The Iowa Warm Line, Iowa Concern and a Spanish line that have staff trained by COVID Recovery Iowa to provide support and referrals. Theresa reported that another big piece of the program is on-going wellness, self-care, awareness and education to help people feel less isolated. The program has added specialty coordinators that are focused on specific areas including individuals with disabilities and older adults. Theresa encouraged Commission members to share COVID Recovery Iowa and the resources there, which can be found on the website but other various social media platforms. As of the beginning

of November there have been over 260,000 connections with people either through group outreach or individual counseling. Lorrie Young inquired how long this program will continue or if there was an end date in place. Theresa indicated the grant from FEMA has an end date of end of June 2021.

Theresa reported that CSS has counties that are looking at making ~~some~~ changes beginning FY22. Cerro Gordo, Webster and Wright counties have been accepted by CICS Region. Pocahontas and Humboldt counties have been accepted by the Rolling Hills Region. Hancock is having strong discussions with the Northwest Iowa Care Connections, and Emmett County is having strong discussions with the Sioux Rivers Region.

Theresa lastly reported about Person-Centered Planning Positive Behavioral Supports Training. DD Council offered dollars to the DHS, MHDS-Community Division and worked in partnership with MHDS and CDD to bring a contractor to the State to provide Person-Centered Planning Positive Behavioral Supports Training and the concept of Train-the-Trainer. Theresa indicated that the Train-the-Trainer concept got really good representation across the state of trainers from the MCOs, Money Follows the Person, the Regions (there were four Regions that had people train), providers, and Iowa Association of Community Providers, who plan to incorporate it over the next year into their Home and Community Based Services Provider Training for any HCBS provider in the state and not just their own association members. The DD Council has given another year of dollars to DHS so we can expand the training with the expert and he can continue to provide support to these statewide trainers as they move forward with their activities.

Russell Wood asked Theresa Armstrong about the continuation of CARES Act dollars. He indicated that Tom Miller along with 48 other Attorney Generals sent a letter about the continuation of CARES Act dollars, and wondered if there has been any discussion at the federal level regarding extending those dollars. Theresa and Marissa stated that they hadn't heard anything specifically so they don't have any feedback to provide at this time. John Parmeter asked Marissa if she had any insight into how many dollars may not be spent by the end of the year. Marissa indicated that she didn't have exact amount of what remains unspent and wouldn't want to comment on a ballpark figure.

Richard Whitaker commented that what he has heard from IACP members that Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) services have come under fire by the Medicaid MCOs recently for medical necessity. Richard indicated that he is hearing from providers that the work that ACT is charged to do with individuals experiencing a chronic mental illness in helping them to achieve a little bit better functioning, is then seen by the MCOs as a reason to deny future services, which is aesthetical to the purpose and definition of ACT. ACT is not meant to be an on-again off-again service, because what you get is a revolving door with people landing in places we're are trying to keep people out of, inpatient units, emergency rooms, etc. Richard questioned that maybe there is a misunderstanding of the intent, purpose and definition of ACT among some of the MCO staff doing authorizations. Teresa Daubitz agreed that this is an issue that she sees every day. Marissa notified Commission members that as they run into individual issues you can escalate them to DHS so that they can work through them with the MCOs.

Break

The Commission left for break from 10:40 a.m. to 10:55 a.m.

Community Living Ambassador Project Presentation

Tammie Amsbaugh introduced the Community Living Ambassador Project to the MHDS Commission, providing a little background about the project. Tammie reported that in 2019 the Iowa DD Council funded a project for the Centers for Disabilities and Development to conduct an ambassador program for individuals who have transitioned to the community, either through the state's Money Follows the Person or other community transitional programs. This program helps them to prepare their stories and make presentations around the state to other individuals, family members and provider agencies. Tammie reported that last fall a group of five ambassadors received training on telling their story and making a speech, and they presented at several locations throughout the state including Glenwood and Woodward Resource Centers, and the Money Follows the Persons Partnership meeting. When the pandemic hit and in-person meetings were no longer possible they transitioned to virtual presentations like the YouTube videos that are being presented today. Tammie indicated that the University of Iowa Health Care, CDD has also selected additional ambassadors to work with this upcoming year, and noted that at this point CDD has 11 individuals and two guardians trained to tell their story on video.

The MHDS Commission viewed a PowerPoint presentation of four separate YouTube video with the stories from ambassadors Michael Gillette, Eric and Marcia Mullins, Mari Brannaman and Brady Werger. John Parmeter thanked all of the presenters for their time and sharing their stories. Timothy Perkins questioned whether Commission members should introduce themselves since the ambassadors were not present at the beginning of the meeting. The MHDS Commission members introduced themselves and provided a bit of background of why they are on the Board.

Planning for Future Meetings

John Parmeter asked if there were any items that members would like included on the agenda for future meetings. Russell Wood suggested adding a presentation on MHDS System Funding with DHS providing input on what is paid for by Medicaid, and what is paid for by Regional funds and where that money comes from. Betsy Akin asked if we have additional suggestions for presentations if members could send those to Wendy DePhillips to be added. John indicated that members could do that at any time.

Public Comment

Brady Werger commented about COVID-19, and indicated that he is working on writing a letter to the Governor to advocate for caretakers and individuals with disabilities to receive the vaccine not just health care workers.

Flora Schmidt indicated that Governor Reynolds and DHS and Public Health Interim Director, Kelly Garcia outlined initial plans for the vaccine distribution today during her press conference.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Wendy DePhillips.